

THAILAND

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THAI, LAO OFFICIALS DISCUSS ACCESS TO MEKONG RIVER ISLAND

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[Text] Negotiations were held on 13 October between officials of the 2d Army Area Forward section and officials of Laos. The Lao officials were Thao Kou and Lieutenant Daothong. According to Maj Gen Phin Keson, the director of the Information Office, and Colonel Wichit Bunyawat, secretary of the Army, the outcome of the negotiations were as follows:

1. Thai villagers are allowed to cultivate at Don Khorat Island provided that they inform the Lao officials beforehand.
2. The Lao soldiers will report to their superior for approval before allowing Thai villagers to cultivate there. Thai villagers are allowed to raise their animals there on specific areas. The Lao soldiers will not attack Thai villagers.
3. If any no po kho [Thai Mekong River Patrol Boats] want to pass by Don Khorat, this must be approved by the Lao side beforehand.

The negotiations were held following the arrest of seven Thai villagers by Lao soldiers when the villagers entered Don Khorat on 7 October for cultivation. After an investigation, which lasted about 2 hours, the villagers were released. The Lao soldiers asked the villagers to tell Thai officers to stop entering Don Khorat.

About 200 Lao armed soldiers seized Don Khorat, an island opposite Ban Na Kang, Phon Phisai District of Nong Khai Province, on 6 October. It was reported that there are about 80 Lao armed soldiers there at present.

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VISITORS TO PRC--Former Police Director General Pol Gen Prasoet Ruchirawong left Bangkok on 17 October for a visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese Government. He is accompanied by former Defense Minister Gen Thawit Seniwong na Ayutthaya. [Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 18 Oct 77 p 5 BK]

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